

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 SS-15 SP-02 ISO-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 EB-08
USIA-06 COME-00 TRSE-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12
NEA-10 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 ABF-01 OMB-01 IGA-02
OES-07 HEW-04 PA-01 PRS-01 H-01 NSC-05 /133 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7513

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 15963

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FAO

SUBJECT: FAO: CALL ON DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA

SUMMARY: SEPTEMBER 27 CALL ON FAO DG SAOUMA IN WHICH
AMBASSADOR INTRODUCED JOHN BAKER AS NEW U.S. REPRESENTA-
TIVE TO U.N. AGENCIES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE WENT
SMOOTHLY. PAST OR PRESENT DIFFERENCES OF VIEW ON SENSI-
TIVE FAO ISSUES WERE NOT RAISED BY EITHER SIDE, ALTHOUGH
OBSERVATIONS BY DG INDIRECTLY CONVEYED HIS RESISTENCE TO
ANY PRESSURES ON PERSONNEL ISSUES OR TO CONCEPT OF CEN-
TRALIZATION OF FUNDING OF U.N. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. NO
NEW ELEMENTS REGARDING SCHEDULED OCTOBER 13-14 VISIT BY
SAOUMA TO WASHINGTON WERE RAISED WHEN APPOINTMENTS WITH
SECRETARY VANCE AND SECRETARY BERGLAND WERE CONFIRMED.
SUBSEQUENT CALL NEXT DAY ON ADG WEST REVEALED SUBSTANTIAL
TENSIONS OVER EVALUATION OF TCP AND FUNDING OF PHL ARE
PRESENT AND LIKELY TO EMERGE DURING SAOUMA VISIT. END

1. DG SAOUMA WAS CANDID IN WELCOMING NEW U.S. REP-
RESENTATIVE TO FAO AND CONVERSED AMIABLY FOR ABOUT
AN HOUR ON VARIOUS NON-CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS.

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2. AFTQR INTRODUCTION BY AMBASSADOR LINKING BAKER
APPOINTMENT TO GROWING PRIORITY OF FAO ACTIVITY IN
CONTEXT PRESIDENT'S HUMAN NEEDS EMPHASIS, BAKER
TOUCHED ON RECENT EVIDENCE OF U.S. INTEREST IN EFFORTS
IN FIELDS OF NUTRITION AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT,
CITING STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT, VANCE, BERGLAND AND
GILLIGAN AND BOURNE VISIT TO FAO AND OBSERVING THAT

SAOUMA VISIT TO WASHINGTON WOULD COME AT TIME WHEN THOROUGH EXAMINATION OF U.S. DEVELOPMENT AID POLICY, ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE WAS UNDERWAY. HE NOTED THAT AS AMOUNT OF U.S. INTEREST AND RESOURCES DIRECTED TOWARD MULTILATERAL PROGRAMS IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INCREASES, IT WAS NATURAL THAT DESIRE FOR SCRUTINY OF THESE PROGRAMS INCREASES AS WELL. SAOUMA COMMENTED THAT, DESPITE PRESSURES FROM JOURNALISTS, HE HAD AVOIDED, IN VIEW OF COMING WASHINGTON VISIT, STATEMENTS ON RECENT U.S. ANNOUNCEMENTS ENCOURAGING SOME CURTAILMENT OF GRAIN PLANTING. HE NOTED THAT JOURNALISTS WOULD HAVE ONLY SINGLED OUT CRITICAL COMMENTS AVOIDING POSITIVE OBSERVATIONS. HE NOTED APPROVINGLY THAT U.S. POLICY LEFT BASIC CHOICE IN INDIVIDUAL FARMER'S HANDS AND THAT IT THEREFORE DIFFICULT TO PREDICT ITS EFFECT ON NEXT YEAR'S CROPS.

3. SAOUMA SHOWED LITTLE REACTION WHEN KEY APPOINTMENTS WITH SECRETARY VANCE AND BERGLAND AND LIKELIHOOD OF GILLIGAN AND CONGRESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS OUTLINED FOR HIS OCTOBER 13-14 VISIT TO WASHINGTON. WHEN UTILITY OF HIS TALKS DURING PREVIOUS VISIT WITH KEY SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN, NOTED HE COMMENTED WRYLY THAT HE HAD HAD LITTLE EFFECT, DESPITE THE WARMTH OF HIS SESSION WITH SENATORS RIBICOFF, PERCY, MCGOVERN, HUMPHREY AND JAVITS.

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4. IN DISCUSSING HIS 3-WEEK ABSENCE FROM ROME IN WASHINGTON, CUBA, MEXICO AND NEW YORK SAOUMA COMMENTED ON HIS PARTICIPATION IN NEW YORK IN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES DISCUSSIONS OF RESTRUCTURING SHOWING SOME ANNOYANCE THAT DG'S VIEWS ONLY NOW BEING SOLICITED. HIS VIEWS WERE CONSISTENT WITH THOSE IN PARAS 94-95 OF JUNE FAO COUNCIL REPORTS AND HIS PROGNOSIS FOR RESTRUCTURING EXERCISE WAS SATISFYINGLY (FOR HIM) NEGATIVE. HE REFERRED SOMEWHAT DERISIVELY TO "FRIENDS OF CHAIRMAN" EFFORT ON RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEE BUT DID ACKNOWLEDGE NEED FOR OVERHAUL OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS DEPT. IN SEPARATE COMMENT IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON EFFORT TO STANDARDIZE U.N. SYSTEM BUDGET PRESENTATION HE STATED WITH PRIDE THAT FAO WAS REGARDED AS BEING AHEAD OF OTHER AGENCIES IN ITS PREPARATION OF A ONE-DOCUMENT PROGRAM BUDGET AND ITS ELABORATION OF MEDIUM-TERM GOALS.

5. OF INTEREST WERE SAOUMA'S COMMENTS ON COMMUNIST MEMBER STATES, VOLUNTEERED PERHAPS, IN VIEW OF HIS AWARENESS BAKER'S SERVICE IN THESE COUNTRIES. CONTRARY TO HIS PREDECESSORS, HE SAID, HE WAS NOT SOLICITING USSR MEMBERSHIP, BELIEVING THAT SUCH EFFORTS WOULD NOT INFLUENCE USSR DECISION AND WOULD SIMPLY

WEAKEN HIS HAND WITH REGARD TO PERSONNEL ISSUES SHOOULD
USSR DECIDE TO JOIN. HE HAD NO PRESENT EVIDENCE THAT
SOVIETS WERE CONSIDERING THIS AND HE SEEMED CONTENT WITH
THEIR ABSENCE NOTING REPORTS OF OTHER DG'S OF ARBITRARY
SOVIET APPROACH TO PLACING, SELECTING, CONTROLLING AND
REQUIRING LARGE SALARY KICKBACKS ("FIFTY PERCENT") OF
THEIR NATIONAL IN UN SYSTEM.

6. SAOUMA APPEARED TO HAVE LESS DIFFICULTY WITH EE
MEMBERS, ALTHOUGH THEY USED SOME OF SAME PRACTICES (ONE
UNESCO AND ONE FAO CASE BOTH INVOLVING ROMANIANS PRES-
SURED BY GOR WERE DESCRIBED AT LENGTH). HE NOTED LOW
EE REPRESENTATION IN SECRETARIAT AND LACK OF BLOC
DISCIPLINE, IN ABSENCE OF SOVIETS, CITING A CASE IN WHICH
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HUNGARY AND POLAND HAD OFFERED COMPETING CANDIDACIES
FOR AN ELECTIVE POSIITION.

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7. SAOUMA'S COMMENTS RE CHINESE WERE QUITE
DIFFERENT IN TONE. HE NOTED THEIR GENTLEMENLY BEHAVIOUR,
LOW PROFILE, LACK OF PRESSURE FOR SECRETARIAT POSTS, AND
EVEN THEIR POLITE DEMURRAL ("WE'RE NOT READY YET")

WHEN HE SOUGHT THEIR VIEWS ON PROVIDING CHAIRMAN FOR NEXT FAO CONFERENCE. ASKED IF HE HAD DETECTED ANY CHANGE, SINCE TENG'S RESURGENCE, IN PRC ATTITUDE TOWARD FAO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE HE INDICATED THAT HE FELT SOME CHANGE MIGHT BE UNDER WAY. AT PRESENT CHINESE WERE HOSTING TWO FAO STUDY GROUPS EXAMINING CHINESE METHODS IN SEVERAL AREAS. SO FAR, THEY HAD NOT, HOWEVER, SOUGHT ASSISTANCE OR OFFERED TECHNICIANS, NOTING THAT THEY WOULD NOT WANT TO DEplete FAO'S BUDGET BY ACCEPTING FAO SALARIES. IN SAME VEIN HE NOTED OBVIOUS PRC PAIN AT HAVING TO KICK IN \$14 MILLION (7 PERCENT) TO PROJECTED FAO BUDGET IN ORDER BE CONSISTENT WITH SUPPORT OF G-77. HE NOTED PRC AGRICULTURAL MINISTER WILL SHORTLY VISIT HIM BUT TOP PRC REP AT FAO CONFERENCE (AT WHICH HE FORECAST 80 AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS) WILL BE VICE MINISTER.

8. SUBSEQUENT BAKER CALL SEPTEMBER 28 ON ADG WEST (DDG CONFIDENTIAL

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JACKSON ABSENT IN YUGOSLAVIA) WAS SHARP CONTRAST IN THAT WEST MOVED QUICKLY AND CANDIDLY INTO FOLLOWING AREAS OF US-FAO CONTROVERSY WHICH HE FELT WOULD UNAVOIDABLY EMERGE DURING SAOUMA WASHINGTON VISIT AND COULD CAUSE CONFRONTATION.

A. POST HARVEST LOSSES (PHL): WEST EXPRESSED SURPRISE OF U.S. "ATTACK" ON PHL, BY WHICH HE MEANT U.S. PLAN TO CHANNEL FUNDING THROUGH UNDP. WHEN BAKER MADE CLEAR U.S. STRONGLY SUPPORTED PHL BUT WAS SEEKING ALTERNATE MEANS OF FUNDING TO USE OF SUSPENSE ACCOUNT, CONSIDERABLE HOSTILITY TO UNDP CHANNELLING EMERGED. ACCUSATION FOLLOWED THAT UNDP WAS HOLDING UP AT PRESENT ON RELEASING FAO PROJECT FUNDS AND WOULD BE SEEN BY DG AS "CONTROLLING" PHL PROGRAM FUNDING CHANNEL. WHEN UNACCEPTABILITY OF USE OF SUSPENSE ACCOUNT STRESSED BY BAKER, WEST COMMENTED THAT OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES SHARING THIS VIEW (HE NAMED FRG AND NETHERLANDS) WERE PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE TO FAO ADMINISTERED TRUST FUND WITHOUT GOING THROUGH UNDP. (WE ARE CHECKING THIS.)

B. EVALUATION. WEST ALSO PREDICTED "CONFRONTATION" IN THAT DG SAW U.S. EMPHASIS ON TCP EVALUATION AS AN ATTACK ON HIS PROGRAM. AT SAME TIME, WEST SHOWED AWARENESS OF RESISTANCE IN KEY AMERICAN QUARTERS TO FUNDING OF TA THRU ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS, ALTHOUGH HE ATTRIBUTED THIS MACHINATIONS OF UNDP AND U.S. PROPONENTS OF CENTRALIZED UN FUNDING OF TA. BAKER EMPHASIZED THAT PROBLEM WAS REAL ONE. WAY TO MEET IT WAS TO HOLD TCP

AT CURRENT LEVEL UNTIL ITS NATURE AND ROLE
COULD BE SHOWN TO SKEPTICS TO BE LIMITED TO DEFINED
AND NEEDED TYPES OF SHORT-TERM ACTIVITIES, ESPECIALLY
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THOSE OF EMERGENCY NATURE. TO DO THIS CONVINCINGLY
THOROUGH EVALUATION REQUIRED.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WEST MAY BE OVER-DRAMATIZING LIKE-
LIHOOD OF SPIRITED EXCHANGE OVER ABOVE TWO ISSUES DURING
SAOUMA VISIT CONSIDERABLE, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF
EVIDENT SAOUMA INTENTION TO ATTACK RESTRUCTURING AND
CENTRALIZED TA FUNDING WHEN IN NEW YORK AND APPARENT
RESUMPTION OF DOWNTREND IN FAO-UNDP RELATIONS TRIGGERED
BY DROP IN COMMITMENT OF UNDP FUNDS TO FAO PROJECTS. WE WILL
BE SEEING SAOUMA AND WEST AT DINNER OCTOBER 5 AND
BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF WE COULD EXPLAIN OUR
PHL APPROACH, PERHAPS INDICATING, IF DEPARTMENT CONCURS
THAT FUNDS COMING THRU UNDP COULD BE PLACED IN AN FAO-
ADMINISTERED PHL TRUST FUND TO WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES
COULD, IF WISHED, CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY RATHER THAN
THROUGH UNDP. WITH REGARD TO EVALUATION, WE WILL PLAN
TO CONTINUE TO MAKE ARGUMENT AS IN 8-B ABOVE.
HOWEVER, WASHINGTON VISIT, ESPECIALLY EXCHANGES WITH KEY
LEGISLATORS, PROVIDES BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR ILLUSTRATING THAT
AS U.S. RESOURCES GOING INTO FAO-WFP-IFAD AREA INCREASE,
NEED FOR EFFECTIVE SCRUTING OF THEIR USE WILL
CONTINUE TO INCREASE CORRESPONDINGLY AND SAOUMA IS MISTAKEN
TO VIEW THIS PERSONALLY AS EVIDENCING LACK OF CONFIDENCE
IN HIM. GARDNER

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TAGS: OCON, AORG, FAO
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